

Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 OPIC-03

IO-10 AID-05 IGA-01 AGR-05 STR-01 CIEP-01 INT-05

OES-03 XMB-02 SIL-01 LAB-04 HEW-02 CU-02 BIB-01 NIC-01

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R 231439Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2420

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 15164

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: INITIAL REACTIONS TO THE PROCLAMATION OF ETHIOPIAN
"SOCIALISM"

REF: (A) ADDIS 15118; (B) ADDIS 15143

1. EMBASSY'S INITIAL SOUNDINGS IN ADDIS, WHICH STILL LIMITED IN SCOPE AND NUMBER, ARE YIELDING PREDICTABLE RESULTS: STUDENTS AND INTERLOCUTORS IN THE LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATA TEND TO FAVOR "ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM" -- THE CONTENTS OF THE DECLARATION REPORTED IN THE REFERENCED TELEGRAMS REMAINING UNCLEAR -- WHILE MIDDLE-CLASS ETHIOPIANS CONSIDER IT WITH RESERVE OR APPREHENSION.

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2. NONE OF OUR INTERLOCUTORS HAS A VERY CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM WILL CONSIST OF, AS, WE ARE TOLD, THE AMHARIC WAS TYPICALLY AMBIGUOUS ON KEY POINTS. WHAT IS CLEAR TO THE PEOPLE WE HAVE SPOKEN WITH IS THAT THERE IS TO BE A TRANSFER OF PROPERTY AND RESOURCES FROM THOSE WHO HAVE TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT. UNDERSTANDABLY, THOSE WHO HAVE NOT LOOK FORWARD TO THE TRANSACTION WHILE THOSE WHO HAVE, FEAR FOR THEIR PROPERTY, THEIR FUTURE, AND THEMSELVES.

3. A LOCAL EMPLOYEE OF THE EMBASSY VOLUNTEERED TO US THAT HE "DIDN'T LIKE" THE DECLARATION. "I HAVE WORKED FOR THE AMERICAN EMBASSY FOR A VERY LONG TIME AND HAVE MANAGED TO BUY SOME LAND AND TO BUILD A HOUSE; WILL THEY NOW TRY TO TAKE IT AWAY FROM ME?" AN EMPLOYEE OF ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES: "ALL THE MERCHANTS ARE AFRAID AND OUR CARGO TRAFFIC WILL SUFFER. THEY HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THEIR FUTURE HERE. ALL OF US IN THE ETHIOPIAN MIDDLE-CLASS ARE ALSO AFRAID. THE 'DIRG' HAS TAKEN OUR CHILDREN INTO THE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COOPERATION CAMPAIGN. NOW THEY ARE HOSTAGE FOR OUR COMPLIANCE WITH THEIR ORDERS. MOST PARENTS WANTED TO REFUSE BUT FEARED TO DO SO LEST THEIR REFUSAL BE CONSTRUED AS OPPOSITION TO THE AUTHORITIES."

4. CELU'S CURRENT LEADERSHIP IS AVOIDING PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE DECLARATION. PRIVATELY CELU OFFICIALS TELL US THAT THE LANGUAGE IS VAGUE ENOUGH TO PERMIT EVERYONE TO READ INTO IT WHAT HE MAY WISH. CELU OFFICERS ARE NO EXCEPTION IN THAT THEY UNDERSTANDABLY FOCUS ON THE BOW TOWARDS LABOR THE DECLARATION IS SAID TO CONTAIN AND HOPE FOR THE BEST.

5. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE FOREIGN BUSINESS COMMUNITY'S SENSE OF INSECURITY HAS TAKEN A QUANTUM JUMP FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF THE DECLARATION. GREEKS, ITALIANS AND ARMENIANS FEEL PARTICULARLY EXPOSED. STORIES ALLEGING THE EXISTENCE OF A LIST OF THOUSANDS OF FOREIGNERS TO BE EXPELLED (PRESUMABLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE TAKEOVER OF THEIR COMMERCE) DO NOTHING TO REASSURE THEM.

6. REACTIONS FROM THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY ARE REPORTED SEPARATELY IN REF B.

7. THERE IS MUCH SPECULATION ON THE US REACTION TO THE DECLARATION.
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TION. HERE, TOO, STORIES ARE CURRENT ABOUT THE IMMINENT DEPARTURE OF MAAG AND THE EXPULSION OF AMERICANS "FROM THE EMBASSY, THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, AND OTHERS."

8. COMMENT: URBAN MIDDLE CLASS ETHIOPIANS WHO ARE THE BUREAUCRATS AND TECHNOCRATS WHO HAVE "MADE IT" IN THIS SOCIETY APPEAR TO SUSPECT AS OF NOW THAT ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM WILL BE CONDUCTED AT THEIR EXPENSE.

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